

Teacher Resource: Fluency

Fluency is the ability to read text accurately, quickly, and with smoothness and expression.

(National Reading Panel, 2000)

An Oral Record of Reading Behavior (often referred to as a Running Record™) is a record that provides teachers with a quick and easy assessment in all three dimensions of fluency and the reading behaviors their students exhibit as they are reading. The analysis of the Oral Record of Reading Behavior supplies information on all three of the dimensions of fluency:

- Accuracy – word recognition is accurate with few miscues.
- Automaticity – word recognition occurs quickly, automatically, and at a reasonable rate.
- Prosody – reading is done with expression and sounds like language.

An analysis of these records also monitors student progress, highlights specific skills and strategies students are using, and provides information for instructional decision making. By using analyses, teachers are then able to address specific needs of individual students, organize student groups with similar needs, and select appropriate level texts.

Accuracy

The number of words correctly recognized or decoded in continuous text is calculated using this formula:

$$(\text{total \# of words in the selection} - \text{\# of errors}) / \text{total \# of words in the selection} \times 100 = \text{\% of accurate reading}$$

Take the total number of words in selection and subtract the number of errors. Divide the difference by the total number of words read. Then multiply that number by 100.

Example: Student read **123** words and had **7** errors

$$\frac{123-7}{123} \times 100 = 94 \% \text{ accuracy}$$

Automaticity

Use a timer during the Oral Record of Reading Behavior to record the minutes and seconds it took the student to read the selection. Then divide the number of words read by the minutes.

Example: Student read 240 words in 1 minute and 42 seconds

$$240/1.7 = 141 \text{ words per minute}$$

Prosody

National Assessment Educational Progress Fluency Scale (2002)	
■ Level 4	Reads primarily in larger, meaningful phrase groups. Although some regressions, repetitions, and deviations from the text may be present, these do not appear to detract from the overall structure of the story. Preservation of the author's syntax is consistent. Some or most of the story is read with expressive interpretation.
■ Level 3	Read primarily in three- or four -word phrase groups. Some smaller groupings may be present. However, the majority of phrasing seems appropriate and preserves the syntax of the author. Little or no expressive interpretation is present. Reader attempts to read expressively and some of the story is read with expression.
■ Level 2	Reads primarily in two-word phrase groups with some three- and four-word groupings. Some word-by-word reading may be present. Word groupings may seem awkward and unrelated to the larger context of the sentence or passage. A small portion of the text is read with expressive interpretation.
■ Level 1	Read primarily word-by-word. Occasional two-word or three-word phrases may occur, but these are infrequent and/or they do not preserve meaningful syntax. Lacks expressive interpretation.

In developing students' reading fluency, it is most helpful to utilize multiple approaches:

- Read Aloud** Models fluent reading and motivates readers. During a read aloud, the student (listener) hears how intonation, expression, phrasing, and pausing are used to create and extend meaning.
- Supported Reading** Provides a scaffold for the developing and struggling readers. Using this type of approach, the more proficient reader provides and gradually releases support as the student becomes increasingly independent. Instructional techniques include: Choral Reading, Paired Reading, Recorded Reading, Echo Reading, and Buddy Reading.
- Repeated Reading** Allows students to practice oral reading independently. Instructional techniques include: repeated reading through direct instruction, Radio Reading, Say It Like the Character, Mumble Reading, and Cooperative Repeated Reading.
- Performance Reading** Requires students to prepare text in order to be performed. This process involves reading for meaning before and during the performance and using repeated reading in preparation to perform for others. Instructional techniques include: Student-Led Read Aloud, Reader's Theater, and Reading/Performing Poetry.

Source: Rasinski, T.V. (2003). The fluent reader. New York: Scholastic.

